

stop ObamaCare or even to try to provide meaningful relief to millions who are hurt by that failed law every day.

I believe that Congress has no power to do anything about the President's unconstitutional Executive amnesty or sanctuary cities or anything else that might secure our borders.

I believe that Republican majorities in both Houses of Congress can do nothing meaningful on spending or the debt or tax reform or regulatory reform, that we can do nothing to rein in the EPA or CFPB, no matter how many millions of jobs they kill.

I believe that Congress must acquiesce to the Obama administration's declaring the Internet to be a regulated public utility and the administration's attempt to give away control of the Internet to an international cartel of stakeholders, including Russia and China.

I believe that Congress can do nothing—absolutely nothing—to stop this catastrophic Iranian nuclear deal. Yes, it will send over \$100 billion to the Ayatollah Khamenei, who chants “Death to America” in front of mobs burning American and Israeli flags, and even though it threatens the security of Israel and potentially the lives of millions of Americans.

I believe that Congress has the constitutional power of the purse, but I believe Congress can still do nothing whatsoever to protect the American citizens.

I believe that Congress can do nothing to protect religious liberty or free speech, that Congress must quietly accept an IRS that targets citizens for exercising their constitutional rights and a President who ignores Federal law and Federal judges who disregard the text of the Constitution.

I believed Republican leadership when they promised the American people that if only we had congressional majorities, we would fight ObamaCare and amnesty and lawlessness. And today, I believe Republican leadership when they say: Of course we cannot and will not do any of that. It was unreasonable for anyone to have believed those promises in the first place.

I believe that anytime President Obama threatens a shutdown, Republican leadership is exactly right to surrender and fund all of Obama's Big Government priorities, to fund ObamaCare and amnesty and Planned Parenthood and the Iranian nuclear deal. Otherwise, Obama might shut down the government and it would be our fault. So we must do whatever he demands no matter what.

I believe that it is unreasonable—radical even—to expect Congress to do any of the things we promised the voters on the campaign trail.

I believe that when a Republican Speaker joins with NANCY PELOSI and the Democrats to fund all of Obama's priorities, that it is the Republican Freedom Caucus who are the crazy ones saying we should stand for something.

I believe that when the Republican Senate majority leader publicly promises there is no secret deal to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank and then 1 month later contorts procedural rules to force through the deal that he had claimed did not exist, that it is not his public lie that matters but, rather, it is the junior Senator who has violated decorum by pointing it out, out loud.

I believe that the only thing we can expect Republican majorities to do is expand government, reauthorize corporate welfare, and grow the debt. That is called governing—always said one octave lower in Washington. Governing is measured by how many bills you pass, and one cannot govern without agreeing with Democrats across the board. If we pass a lot of bills, even if they do nothing to address the debt or bring back jobs or economic growth and even if they actually expand Washington power and make the problem worse, then I believe we should celebrate.

I believe that Democrats can never be forced to compromise on anything, that it is always unreasonable to ever try to win a political battle with them, and so it must always be the Republicans who agree to the Democrat's Big Government priorities. I believe the only way Republicans can win is to continue making these same mistakes over and over and over again.

Of course, I do sometimes wonder why it matters if we have Republican majorities in Congress. After all, leadership has told me that they cannot accomplish anything different from the Democrats, that it is an unreasonable demand to expect them to fight Obama on anything. Since it is only the crazy “kamikaze caucus” who thinks we can fight Obama on any issue, anything whatsoever, I believe that leadership is right to fight on nothing, to pass the very same bills filled with pork and corporate welfare, the Export-Import Bank, ObamaCare funding, and amnesty, and confirm the very same Attorney General the Democrats would have confirmed.

I do wonder sometimes, as Hillary Clinton would have put it, what difference does it make? But then I put aside such foolish thoughts. Instead, I believe.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Republicans continue to object to requests for unanimous consent on basic things we should be able to do in a bipartisan manner here in the Senate. In addition

to my request about gender discrimination, Republicans have previously objected to unanimous consent requests to allow votes on noncontroversial judicial nominees with bipartisan support to fill vacancies in our Federal judiciary. These requests are not remotely controversial; yet the Republicans continue to obstruct for obstruction's sake.

Since the Republicans took over in January, their leadership has allowed only nine judges to be confirmed. A few district court judges have been confirmed in the last few weeks, but this recent increase in activity is in sharp contrast to their inaction all year. When Senate Democrats were in the majority during the last 2 years of the Bush Presidency, we had already confirmed 34 judges by this point—nearly four times more judges than Republicans have confirmed this year.

Republicans have tried to justify their poor record by accusing Senate Democrats of scheduling votes for 11 judges during the lameduck session last December. They suggest that those 11 confirmations under last year's Democratic majority should somehow be counted towards this year's confirmation numbers. First, it is well-established Senate precedent to approve all pending consensus nominees before the end of a year. And second, even if we did ignore reality and count these 11 judges towards the Republicans majority's record, that would only bring their count up to 20 confirmations this year. That is still far behind the 34 nominees that Democrats confirmed in the last 2 years of the Bush administration.

The glacial pace in which Republicans are currently confirming uncontroversial judicial nominees is a failure to carry out the Senate's constitutional duty of providing advice and consent. We should be responding to the needs of our Federal judiciary so that, when hard-working Americans seek justice, they do not encounter the lengthy delays that they currently face today. Because of Republican obstruction, judicial vacancies have increased by more than 50 percent since they took over the majority this January and caseloads are piling up in courts throughout the country.

We can and should take action right now to alleviate this problem by holding confirmation votes on the 16 judicial nominees pending on the floor. A number of these pending nominees have the support of their Republican Senators; yet they continue to languish on the calendar without a vote.

If Republican obstruction continues and if home State Senators cannot persuade the majority leader to schedule a vote for their nominees soon, then it is unlikely that even highly qualified nominees with Republican support will be confirmed by the end of the year. These are nominees that members of the majority leader's own party want confirmed, including several from Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Last week,